

The New Route to Klondike.

By R. L. McINTOSH.



CAPTAIN WILLIAM MOORE, WHO DISCOVERED THE WHITE PASS ROUTE.
From a Photo. by Mr. Escolme.

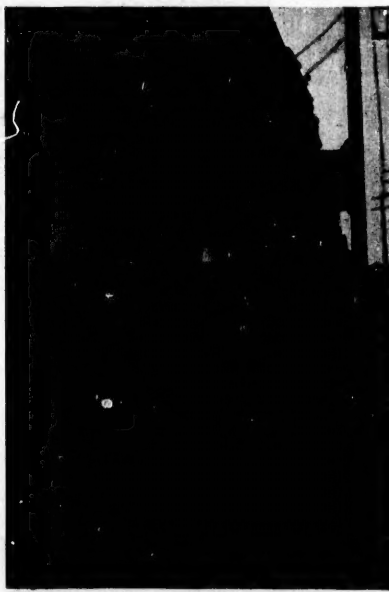


HERE can be no doubt that the shortest and easiest way into the Yukon country is that known as the White Pass route, which is open all the year round. The White Pass route was virtually made by the British Columbia Development Association, who cut a trail over the Pass from the sea to Lake Bennett entirely at their own cost. It is, by this time, pretty well known that the White Pass route is the one which will be most popularly adopted in the great rush for the gold-bearing regions, which has already commenced.

The first photograph reproduced on this page shows Captain William Moore, the discoverer of the White Pass route to the Klondike. For many years Captain Moore suspected the existence of the White Pass route to the Yukon, but the Indians, who commonly used it, were afraid that if they told the white man about it, big pack-trains would at once be sent over, thus superseding the Indians as pack "animals." Captain Moore is an old pioneer, and he formerly ran a steamboat of his own on the Stikine River. He has been many times over the Chilcoot, and generally knows the country extremely well. It was he who brought

the White Pass route to the notice of the British Columbia Development Association, just when the Klondike rush was beginning. He was introduced to the company's agent at Victoria, and, of course, he wanted to be financed, having no money of his own. Later on, Mr. John H. Escolme went out to British Columbia as the general manager of the company, and to this gentleman we are indebted for most of the photographs herein reproduced.

We next reproduce a photograph of one of the streets in Victoria, B.C., showing the striking advertisements that are now exhibited in order to attract the custom of intending prospectors. You will observe that an enterprising outfitter points out, "We supplied the miners for Cariboo, and we can supply you for Klondyke." This interesting little snap-shot was taken by Dr. Hugh Robert Mill, of the Royal Geographical Society. All



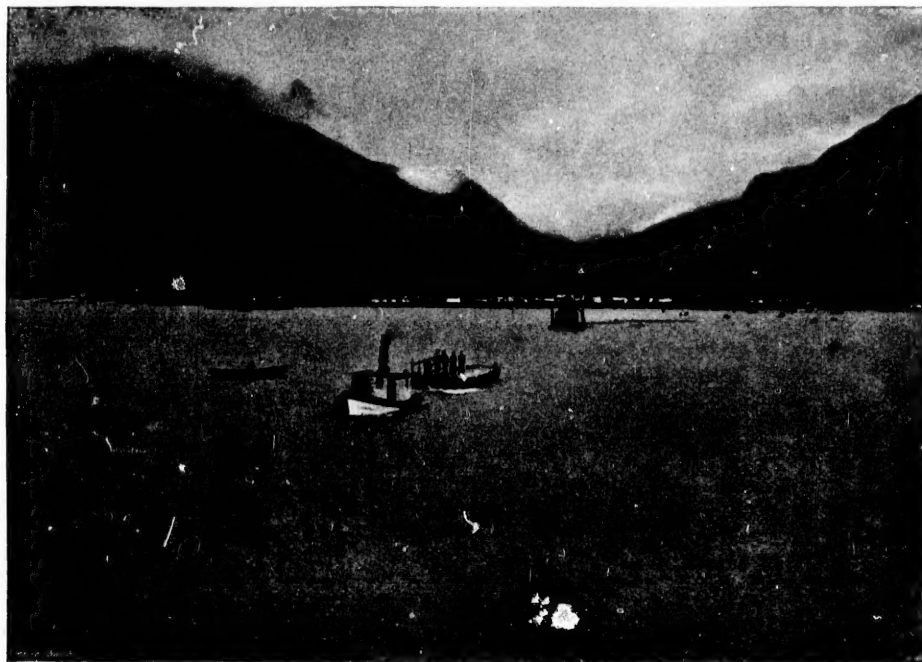
KLONDIKE EXCITEMENT IN VICTORIA, B.C.
From a Photo. by Dr. Hugh R. Mill.

things considered, it is, of course, much the best plan for British Klondikers to buy their outfit either in Victoria or Vancouver.

"We," said Mr. Escolme, speaking in the name of his company, "have built a large wharf at Skaguay, at the head of the Lynn Canal, which is a large body of water forming part of the Pacific Ocean. Skaguay is situated right at the foot of the mountains, as you can see for yourself in the accompanying photograph. The little town is built upon

steamers drawing up to thirty feet of water can at any time come and anchor there without any fear of being troubled with ice. It is extraordinary how quickly the place became a thriving town. Trees were cut down, claims staked out, and tents and log-houses erected in an incredibly short space of time.

"Now," says Mr. Escolme, "this mushroom town is quite a big place, with houses not only all over the flat but also stretching away back up the valley. At the present time, unfortunately,



[From a]

THE TOWN OF SKAQUAV, FROM THE SEA.

[Photograph.

about 160 acres of level ground, which has apparently been formed by the *débris* deposited by the River Skaguay itself. Originally the site of Skaguay was merely a broad bit of delta, with trees coming right down to the high-water mark. The intending Klondike prospector ships direct, say, from London to Victoria, B.C., or Vancouver. When he gets there, he will find much excitement in the town."

There are, of course, excellent steamers now plying direct from Vancouver to Skaguay. Here the miner gets his goods packed over the summit of the White Pass, and generally it may be said that Skaguay is the jumping-off place for Dawson City and the whole of the Yukon district. The great advantage of Skaguay is that

Skaguay is disputed territory, and is now administered by the American authorities. Our company has spent a good deal of money on the place, and in return, of course, we have our wharf and harbour dues, besides owning a large portion of the land."

A very excellent idea of the character of Skaguay is conveyed by the next photograph shown, which is a view of Trail Street. This shows the kind of booths and primitive erections which have been run up in the town. On the left-hand side is seen a party of miners, whose goods are, most probably, in the hands of the packers. The men with the oars will, no doubt, carry these on their shoulders, with goods balanced upon the shafts litter-wise. On the

right-hand side are seen some boxes, probably containing rice or beans. Observe the saloon in the background, significantly called "The Nugget."

"When I was there, we had two regular music-halls, besides which every liquor saloon ran some

these men had seen a large expanse of ground unclaimed for several weeks, and simultaneously they made a dash upon it, and rigged up their houses, marvelling that the land had not been claimed before. Now, about every six weeks comes the high tide, and one fine morning you



From a Photo. by

TRAIL STREET, SKAGUAY, SHOWING MINERS ABOUT TO START.

La Roche, of Seattle.

sort of an entertainment. All the houses were built of rough lumber, as also were the restaurants, of which there were a great number. You can dine or lunch in one of these establishments for about fifty cents, which is certainly not exorbitantly dear. The street you are looking at—Trail Street—is a fine wide thoroughfare running up to meet the trail, but as a general rule the streets are extremely narrow, because every man was anxious to utilize the ground he had claimed, down to the last square inch. It may amuse you to know that the streets are called by very high-sounding names, such as Bond Street, Regent Street, the Broadway, and Paradise Alley.

"As you doubtless know, many shrewd persons at the beginning of the boom decided that they would not go gold-seeking themselves, but that they would do their best to acquire land for building purposes in a place like Skaguay where miners come and go. Consequently, the rush for the land was a blind and feverish business. Here is rather a funny story about the land-jumping craze. A number of the settlers erected houses on ground that was actually below high-water mark! Several of

might have seen those fellows down by the sea, gazing with an anxious eye upon the rising tide. That night half the town of Skaguay was completely washed away."

In the town of Skaguay, prospectors could always depend upon finding plenty of ponies on which to pack goods for the purpose of transport. There were at least 3,000 ponies working there last fall, all of which came from Oregon and the American side generally. The illustration next given shows the kind of ponies used. They are amazingly hardy, and seem to live on next to nothing. This photo. was taken in a comparatively easy part of the Skaguay trail. It shows a pack-train having a couple of hours' rest. There are, of course, men at Skaguay who do nothing else but packing. The charge for portage to Lake Bennett has been as high as fifty cents a pound, but when the snow was on the ground it was possible to get terms as low as six or eight cents. In the winter, a man could easily haul 600lb. of stores over the snow in a sledge. Weighing is not resorted to very much, but a rough calculation is made, the load on each pony being estimated at about 200lb. If the prospector

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From a

PACK-TRAIN RESTING ON THE SKAGUAY TRAIL.

[Photograph.]

takes 1,000lb. of food stuffs with him, this should last him a year at a very liberal rate of allowance. If the miner decides on taking out his own food supplies, he will require at least seven horses to carry everything. Altogether, he may expect to have with him 500lb. of outfit and stores and 1,000lb. of food.

The packing people at Skaguay usually send one man with a six-horse pack-train and two men with ten horses. The first four and a half miles of the journey out of Skaguay and along the trail is on a very good flat route. Then the first rise is reached. The next photograph reproduced here gives an extremely good idea of this bit of the trail. Here we see the kind of country to be traversed, and we are also shown how the trail winds along the hills.

It is the next photograph which gives, perhaps, the very best notion of the enormous difficulties of travel in this country.

"You will notice," said Mr. Escolme, "that the trail resembles a kind of trench. The fact is, the whole place was covered with soft, thick moss, which we had to scrape away to a considerable depth. Then,

in the bed of the trench or trail, we put down as many stones as we could get. The going was all very well in the summer time, but the moment the rains came, the water percolated through the layers of moss on either side, and converted the trail itself into an awful morass. Occasionally at such times one comes across a regular mud-pit, into which a man would sink to his arm-pits. These mud-holes, however, we gradually filled up by 'corduroying'—that is to say, by throwing down layer after layer of tree stumps and timbers. The

trail runs up and down the hills in switchback fashion, and provided the weather be good, the country will be found very pleasant, and the timber in most parts not at all thick. Moreover, every day that goes by finds some improvement,



From a Photo. by]

THE TRAIL COMMENCES TO RISE.

[Mr. Escolme.



From a Photo. by]

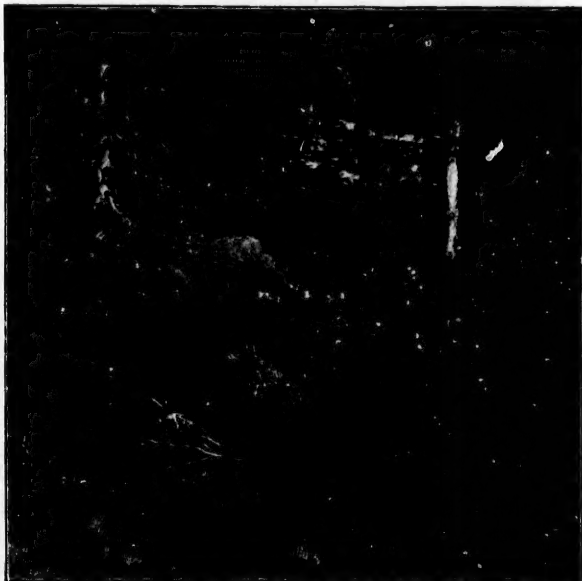
A ROUGH BIT OF THE TRAIL.

[La Roche, of Seattle.

and ultimately a small-gauge railway will be constructed from the Skaguay right to the shores of Lake Bennett."

The next photograph shown depicts one of Mr. Escolme's men cutting a pathway for his pack-train through a rough bit of the trail. Mr. Escolme, by the way, tells a very pathetic story of a miner who, being too poor to pay the cost of portage by horse, formed the heroic resolution of carrying all his goods himself from Skaguay to Lake Bennett over the Great Divide. This must have been a most trying and exhausting undertaking; but by dint of much patience the man accomplished his arduous task in about six weeks. His mode of procedure was to carry on his back about 150lb. of goods, which he would deposit by the side of the trail about a mile on the way Klondikewards. This done, he would return for another load, and so on. Eventually he reached the shores of Lake Bennett, and proceeded to build himself a boat. At length everything was in readi-

ness for the commencement of the journey to the goldfields, and the triumphant miner was



From a Photo. by]

MINER CUTTING HIS WAY OVER THE WHITE PASS.

[Mr. Escolme.



From a Photo. by EDITH GORGE, SUMMIT OF THE WHITE PASS.

[Mr. Escolme.]

congratulating himself on the worst part of the journey being over. He then thought that he could very well afford to indulge in the luxury of a rest before starting, and having loaded up his boat, he tied it to a tree-stump on shore and then went off to sleep. When he awoke some hours later, he was absolutely stupefied to find that some scoundrel had come along, cut the painter of the boat, and made off with everything he possessed. It was really a most heartrending case, and the unfortunate man took it so much to heart that he made desperate attempts to kill himself. He was prevented, however, from doing himself injury, and he was taken back to Skaguay, where he eventually took up some menial employment.

Mr. Escolme says that, all things considered, there had been extremely few cases of theft along the trail. He knows, however, of at least one man who was hanged by the miners for this offence.

Our next photo. shows us Edith Gorge, which

is a typical bit of scenery at the summit of the White Pass, an altitude of 2,600ft. above sea level. On his way from Skaguay to Dawson City, the miner at length comes to the Canadian Custom House, where the invoices for his outfit are demanded. If he cannot produce these, and is forced to admit that he bought his things in Seattle or any other American port, he is not allowed to pass until he has paid heavy duty. On arriving at Lake Bennett, the miner will no longer find it necessary to build his own boat. Certainly he can do this for about 100dols., or he can buy one for any sum between 200dols. and 800dols. After launching his boat on Lake Bennett, the miner keeps on his course into the winding arm of Tagish Lake, where his goods are overhauled by the Canadian Customs. Here is a photo. kindly lent by the Canadian Pacific Railway which shows the Dominion officials collecting duty at Tagish.

Then come Lake Lebarge and the White Horse Rapids, where there is an overland portage of about a mile. There is, probably, by this time a tramway, which carries one's goods over for about two cents a pound.

A great outcry was made about the shocking condition of suffering in the Skaguay trail, but, as Mr. Escolme points out, the moment it became generally known that people could get in that way, a great rush took place, and in a few weeks thousands of horses and men set to work packing over the newly-cut trail, with the in-



From a]

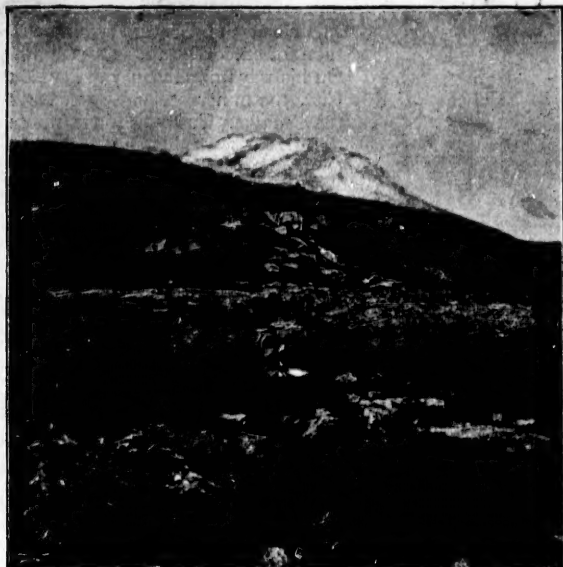
CANADIAN OFFICERS COLLECTING REVENUE AT TAGISH.

[Photograph.

Seattle.

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Mr. Escolme.



From a Photo. by

DISTANT VIEW OF JACK'S PEAK.

[Mr. Escolme.

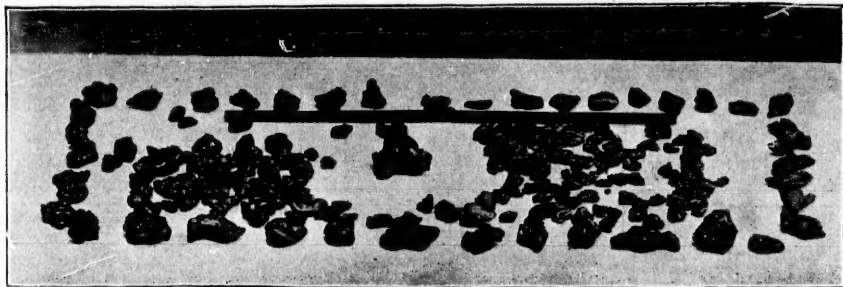
evitable result that it broke down and caused much suffering and loss of life and good horse-flesh. Notwithstanding, however, some three thousand people are said to have gone in last autumn by this same trail—a much larger number than by all the other routes combined. A railway is in course of construction from Skaguay to Lake Bennett *via* the White Pass, and will be extended later on to Fort Selkirk. Moreover, a waggon road is being built from the Skaguay to Lake Bennett, on which two hundred and seventy men have been at work for several months. Thus, in a very short time, it will no longer be a matter of great difficulty to reach the Klondike regions—and this notwithstanding the wild

nature of the country, which is admirably illustrated by the photograph here reproduced. This photo. was taken by Mr. Escolme himself, and it is a view looking across the country towards Jack's Peak.

Mr. Escolme greatly doubts whether much suffering has been experienced in the Yukon district. "Why," he says, "the very first man who would have complained about lack of food would have been Inspector Constantine, of the North-West Mounted Police, who is responsible for the well-being of all British subjects in the district. Constantine has never sent out any information that food supplies were inadequate."

Finally, Mr. Escolme—who has just come back from the district—offers this advice: "Prospectors ought not to accept the interested statements of transportation companies. They would be well advised to go to Victoria, Vancouver, or Seattle, and make a flying trip from any one of these places to Skaguay, Dyea, and Wrangel respectively, before definitely deciding which route they will take. A week or so may be lost in doing this, but it will well repay the prospector, and save much subsequent disappointment."

Lastly, we reproduce a photo. of some real Klondike nuggets—all of virgin gold. Better than pages of description, this. Mr. Edward Brooks, of Narrimmo, B.C., writes: "These nuggets constitute less than half a moose-skin sack of gold brought out last spring by a Mr. J. Wilkinson. He was only at work a few months at his Klondike River claim. The value of the few nuggets shown is 1,200dols., the one in the centre alone being worth 55dols."



From a Photo. by

TWELVE HUNDRED DOLLARS' WORTH OF KLONDIKE NUGGETS.

[E. C. Brooks, Narrimmo.